

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An information retrieval system for automatically retrieving information related to the context of an active task being manipulated by a user. The system observes the operation of the active task and user interactions, and utilizes predetermined criteria to generate a context representation of the active task that are relevant to the context of the active task. The information retrieval system then processes the context representation to generate queries or search terms for conducting an information search. The information retrieval system reorders the terms in a query so that they occur in a meaningful order as they naturally occur in a document or active task being manipulated by the user. Furthermore, the information retrieval system may access a user profile to retrieve information related to the user, and the select information sources or transform search terms based on attributes related to the user, such as the user's occupation, position in a company, major in school, etc.